

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tertiary Education generally refers to any type of education pursued beyond the high school level. This includes diplomas, undergraduate, and graduate certificates, Associate, Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral degrees. More commonly it is referred to as post-secondary education. Tertiary Education programs are run in vocational schools, community colleges, technical schools, professional schools, colleges and universities. Tertiary Education/ Higher Education are used interchangeably in this study. India's Tertiary Education system is the third largest in the world, next to United States and China.

In sheer numbers and diversity, India is home to one of the largest Higher Education systems in the world. The possibilities seem great for Higher Education institutes in the country that are charged with equipping our graduates to compete in today's knowledge based society. Distance education, cutting edge learning-management systems and the prospect of collaborating with important institutions from other parts of the world are the transformational benefits that public and private universities in the country have started embracing.

India's Higher Education needs radical reforms. This is evident from the fact that though enrolment in Higher Education is on the rise it continues to remain low compared to some of the developing countries of Asia and Latin America. Indian Higher Education institutions need to improve in quality and transparency to be at par with the world standards. This is because the dramatic growth Higher Education has witnessed has come at the cost of

quality. This has resulted in many students graduating with credentials but without any job relevant skillsets. This study traces progress of Tertiary Education since independence before taking a critical look at the infrastructure for skill development in our country.

It is easy to point out reasons such as lack of resources, money and time needed to build large educational institutions. However, it needs to be fully recognized that the value of the most essential resource in these institutions, namely talent. It is important to attract best talent, students, faculty and administrators for quality education and progress of Higher Education. The skill development in China has been taken as an example for drawing suitable lessons. China and India face similar problems with respect to the population explosion and hence have the responsibility of steering the demographic dividend in the right direction.

However, significant challenges also loom large. Some of these challenges have to do with issues related to management and regulation. The major challenge is to ensure equity in the quality of education that is available across the country. Quality education assumes importance to students in rural, semi-urban and urban areas, as they are eager to become stakeholders in the ongoing economic revolution in the country. A large number of additional students are knocking at the doors of our educational institutions. The system must grow at a rapid pace to cater to the educational needs of these students.

Currently India has 7% economic growth, and it is one of the world's fastest developing economies. Unemployment, however remains a serious issue. Owing to demographic explosion, India is in the situation of reaping the

benefits of demographic dividend. The framework of NEP rolled out in 2015 has provided a blueprint for innovative government initiatives to meet contemporary challenges in Higher Education. Keeping this in view, the curriculum reforms and measures to be taken for improving quality in education system are discussed in the study.

Knowledge is a key driver of productivity and economic growth. The power of knowledge along with capable decisions, information and innovation can certainly transform the Higher Education sector in our country. Against this background, the study makes suggestions and recommendations for improving the quality of Tertiary Education in India. In lieu of the present reforms in Higher Education sector the study emphasizes the need for adequate changes in infrastructure to make the vision of a renewed skilled India a reality.